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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TEL AVIV 003561

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: MOD DG AMOS YARON ON PASSAGES, THE BARRIER, AND  
SALES TO VENEZUELA

Classified By: Ambassador Daniel C. Kurtzer for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (C) Summary: The Ambassador met with Ministry of Defense (MOD) Director General Amos Yaron recently to discuss the status of the seamline barrier around major settlement blocs. Yaron said that the idea of building a wall in Hebron has been turned down by the Attorney General. Yaron noted that the MOD will be in charge of all technical work related to the passage s, and that their proper functioning depends in part on the security situation. He asked for clearer USG guidance on the modalities of mortar sales to Venezuela and said Israel would do its "best to abide" by the guidance. End summary.

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Seamline Barrier  
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2. (C) Ministry of Defense (MOD) Director General Amos Yaron told the Ambassador that the decision on the location of the seamline barrier around the major settlement blocs is in various stages. He noted that the Ma'ale Adumim and Gush Etzion barrier decisions are with the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), and the Ariel barrier decision is with the High Court. Yaron mentioned there are problems between the MOD and the MOJ regarding the route of the barrier around Jerusalem.

3. (C) Yaron said the barrier in the Eshkolot area may not keep its current route east of the quarries. He commented that the GOI will find local solutions and may split the quarries if they are close to the barrier by running the barrier through the quarry instead of around it.

4. (C) Yaron continued that the idea of building a wall in Hebron has been turned down by the Attorney General. He explained that Central Commander Yair Naveh came up with the concept of building the wall because he is "angry that the settlers keep attacking the soldiers."

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Crossings  
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5. (C) The Ambassador informed Yaron that Brigadier General (res) Baruch Spiegel, MOD advisor, had expressed concern about the water, sewage, and sanitation problems in Wadi Hanun in the Gaza Strip impacting the construction of the Erez Crossing. Yaron said that it would be good if USAID got involved in the area to help the Palestinians deal with the environmental issues there. He said, "You have to do something about this."

6. (C) Yaron told the Ambassador that he had a meeting with Vice Prime Minister Shimon Peres to better coordinate the disengagement process amongst themselves. They decided that all technical work related to passages would fall under the MOD, and that Peres would work on policy matters. Yaron continued that the MOD is not in a position to limit business by holding containers and trucks at crossings, and if trucks "want to cross today, they cross today." He said the proper functioning of passages will depend on the security situation, and on the passages being built to the specifications in the tenders.

7. (C) Yaron said he told World Bank President James Wolfensohn in early May that it is important to increase Palestinian ownership of the disengagement process. He noted that "we have to try to find a way or create a situation in which ordinary Palestinian people start to feel that they have something to lose." As such, he told Wolfensohn that the GOI has to "speed up the passages" and needs \$150-200 million to build them because the first priority is movement of goods and people.

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Sales to Venezuela  
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8. (C) Regarding Israeli sales of mortars and other defense equipment to Venezuela, Yaron told the Ambassador that Israel has "quite a large business there" of a few million dollars and needs more specific guidance from the USG. He explained that this amount of trade is significant for Israel, and requested clearer guidance from the USG on arms sales to

Venezuela in order to avoid another China.

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